

Coneth's Loss

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Location: Wildspace

Party: 5 Players of levels 3-4

Set up:

- Gaspar's Reclamations has been contracted to find the prototype wand rumored to be created by the great wizard Coneth. They're willing to pay good money to anyone who can retrieve the wand or information on its location. The problem is that Coneth's ship, and workshop, have been missing for decades.
- Traveling through wildspace, the party's ship drops out of spelljamming speed suddenly. Preparing for a battle, the players see nothing but still space and a large ship. The ship, looking like a flounder, makes no moves and no attempts to hail the players.

Coneth's Flounder Barge:

Looking beyond your deck, a large ship floats some distance away. This 25-ton vessel of wood takes up a flat, wide area but has a height no larger than two stories at the center. From this high point, the tops slant down to rounded edges; the whole vessel reminiscent of a groundling flounder. The ship's air pocket still exists and appears to be clear.

The vessel remains unmoving in the distance. There appears to be no movement on the top deck though you have no indication of what exists in the ship's hold.

The vessel in the distance is Coneth's Flounder Barge; a ship that has been missing for decades. Coneth was a renowned wizard with a specialty in making constructs. Much of his fame and presence came from his work in helping develop large structures quickly. His golems, constructs, and animation magics made building heavy objects a breeze, especially because heat, cold, and oxygen were never a problem. This earned him plenty of work in the system's early spacefaring development.

This work barge functioned as his base of operations and home before it vanished. It was last seen on its way to a new construction project though it never arrived. With the vastness of space, efforts to find the vessel have been unsuccessful.

Rumor was Coneth had been working on a wand that could animate any object. Indeed, he succeeded but in exchange for his ship and life. Upon completing his new tool, the magics took hold and animated the wand itself! In self-preservation, the wand began animating any object nearby, now under its control, to prevent itself from being shut down. Coneth was slain in the ensuing battle as he tried desperately to activate his emergency anti-magic field. In short time, the ship was lost to the constructs and left adrift.

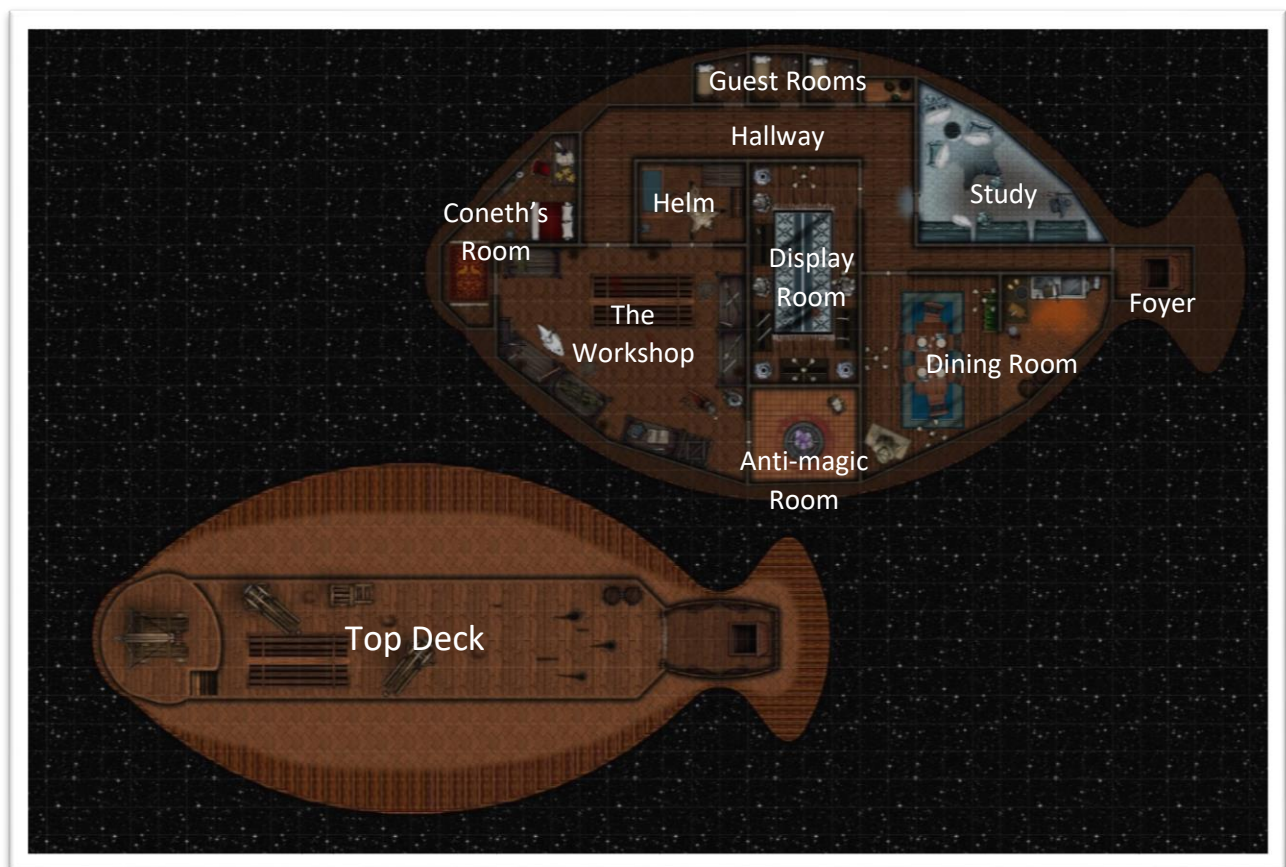
Now, the wand lies dormant in wait within Coneth's workshop, attached to the tail of an animated scorpion carving, and surrounded by protective constructs. While dormant, it wants nothing more than to remain animated and will stop anyone from changing that.

The Constructs:

The wand animates things very well but was never designed to de-animate. Coneth assumed these temporary animations would simply fizzle out without continual spell power; not that he lived long enough to figure this out. As such, all the constructs on this ship will keep reanimating even after being beaten down. At your discretion, have defeated constructs rise again, beaten and mangled, as needed to keep the players moving or on their toes. How soon they reanimate and how much health they have is left to DM's preference, just know that the only thing able to keep them down is an anti-magic field.

Any construct created by the wand is also mindlessly loyal to it. All constructs created have one purpose: protect the wand. Constructs that can speak should proudly state their battle cry of "Protect the Creator!" Players should assume the "creator" is Coneth until they reach the final room.

If a player is in possession of the wand at any time, they are the unwavering focus of the constructs. Even if the players leave the barge, any construct they create with the wand should follow this logic. Assume the wand has a telepathic link with all of its creations.



Top Deck:

Entering the ship's air, you find it breathable but stale. It has not been fouled though it feels as if it has not moved in some time. Even at the edge, an aroma of moist wood and lacquer forming a fair note on your nostrils.

Placing your boots on the ship's deck, you are greeted with the eerie stillness of the large ship. Would this be in operation, a dozen sailors should be running back and forth tending to the ship's rigs and operations. However, this large section remains still.

Towards the tail, a double-sided door stands between you and the only enclosed part of the deck. The wood before this opening has been marred by large scorch marks and holes.

Turning your gaze to the front, you see two loading cranes poised over a cargo hatch. Dents and scratches fill the space between large gouges that surround the lifts. Further beyond is the weapons' deck; a raised platform sporting the ship's only apparent defense, a moderately-sized ballista.

This deck only appears to be deserted. Indeed, both the ballista and the two lifts are animated constructs that do ample work to defend the top deck. The large gouges are caused by the lifts swinging around their massive cargo hooks. The charred holes are the result of ballista's main fire on unaware boarders.

Observant characters (DC 10) should be able to figure out that the scorch marks appear to come from the front of the ship. A similar check will reveal the gouge marks on the ground are from the rigs' blocks and hooks bludgeoning the deck.

As soon as the players begin to head towards the ship front or the doors, the constructs begin their assault. A DC 15 perception check will alert the player making the check to the ballista slowly turning to face them. Otherwise, the constructs will try their best for a surprise round.

Encounter: Animated Ballista and 2x Loading Rigs (flavored as cargo cranes).

Once the encounter is cleared, the players should be looking to dive deeper into the ship. The cargo doors are latched and barred on the inside. If convenient, have one of the rigs fall and cover it or otherwise indicate it is locked tight. The intended way down is through the small enclosed structure towards the tail. This area contains a hole and railing for people to easily fall down across the gravity plane to enter the deck's underside into an animated interior.

Foyer and Hallway:

Righting yourself in the interior, you are greeted with a dim room. This room appears to be well-made; a sort of foyer.

Opening the doors immediately in front of you, you see a dark hall extending forward about 40 foot before disappearing in a turn. The walls are painted regally with the floor being a polished wood.

Approaching the turn in hallway reveals an ornate double door to on the left.

Any players attempting a perception check (DC 10) towards the corner will notice a faint red glow coming from this door. Entering leads to the Dining Room.

Rounding the corner places you in a wider section of hallway. To the right, a single door with frost building around its hinges and on the floor draws your immediate eye. Further down, another double door appears on the left. The hallway disappears around a left turn with another single door about 30 feet away, ending the corridor.

The frozen door leads to the Study. The room on the left before the turn is the Display Room. Finally the door at the very end of the hall is a broom closet.

Opening the broom closet will reveal a utility room packed with buckets, glass containers of cleaner, and a broom. This broom is a Broom of Animated Attack and will attack when the door is being closed or when grabbed.

Encounter: Broom of Animated Attack.

Turning left reveals a long stretch of hallway with three doors lining the right wall. The hallway continues forward to disappear to another left.

These three doors lead to the Guest Bedrooms.

Rounding the final turn you see perhaps one of the strangest sights to behold. Blocking a set of large metal doors is a set of animated armor bearing a shield and lance astride a mahogany bench. The bench stamps its foot. The rider declares "Protect the Creator!" in an ethereal, tinny voice before flipping down its visor.

Encounter: 1 Animated Armor (AC 20, 1d12 piercing damage dice) with a shield and lance mounted on an Animated Table. The Armor will try its best to lance characters that get knocked prone. If dismounted, the Armor will drop its weapons and attack as a normal. This armor's goal is to keep the characters away from the workshop.

Defeating this "knight" leads to the Workshop. If the players are bypassing rooms, feel free to have the animations from the Display Room spill into the hall.

Dining Room:

You open the door to reveal a lush dining room. A beautiful carved table lies under chandeliers. A wine rack takes most of one wall while a large statue takes up the corner. Forward and to the left, you see the room continue beyond, a warm red glow coming from within.

Passing the dining room, you enter the kitchen. Tools and food lies scattered as if a meal in progress was interrupted. From the wall, the stove radiates a soft glow and heat. Still lit and warm.

Within moments of the players getting in range, the stove should attack with its fire belch, catching the players off guard. If needed, use the table to make the first move and follow up with the stove.

Encounter: Animated Stove and an Animated Table.

Study:

Opening the door you see a large study, you feel the cold and notice your breath form wisps. Glancing around the room, you see a grisly scene: Some person used his final moments to freeze himself and other figures in place. His staff, a jagged blue object, held high in defense. Around the epicenter, you notice snow and ice built along every inch of the room, covering the bookshelves, chairs, and statue.

The staff in question is an Animated Staff of Frost. An intelligent player might make it out as a Staff of Frost and they should continue to think that up until it is taken. As soon as someone grabs the staff, it will attempt to control their mind using its ability.

Should it succeed, it might force the poor character to block off the door with a wall of ice and Cone of Cold those who get stuck inside. If it is not successful, it will likely do its best to freeze a few adventurers.

Searching the room reveals a wizard's spellbook locked in the frost on the table nearby the chairs. Likewise a scroll can be found on the bookshelves.

Encounter: Animated Staff of Frost.

Treasure: Spellbook and a Scroll of the Apprentice Artificer.

The spellbook is a compendium written in black wax and bound in carved wood plates. It contains the following spells:

1st Level: Catapult, Expeditious Retreat, Jump

2nd Level: Dragon's Breath, Magic Weapon, Maximilian's Earthen Grasp

Scroll of the Apprentice Artificer (Scroll): This scroll contains information and incantations necessary to make a Scroll of the Apprentice Artificer. To decipher and use the scroll, you must be a spellcaster. Creating a new scroll requires 1 day and supplies costing 1 gp. Once you finish creating your new scroll, the original scroll is consumed in eldritch flames. Your new scroll becomes a Scroll of the Apprentice Artificer when the ashes of the original scroll are sprinkled on it.

Display Room:

Before you lies a large open room. The walls appear to be lined with pictures, tables, and suits of armor. On the tables weapons and small objects sit on display. Against the far wall, a small object glows a faint blue.

This room was the display room for the wizards' creation showcase. Any potential buyers would have been treated to displays of use in this room. Needless to say, most of the objects in here are animated and will come to life as the players enter sufficiently.

A DC 15 perception check can make out the bloodstains on the carpet, potentially alerting the players to the upcoming battle.

The armors will come to life with a chorus of “Protect the Creator!” in ethereal metallic voices.

Encounter: 3x Animated Armors, 2 Animated Knives, 2 Flying Swords, and 1 Animated Halberd.

If the players can make it through the room, the glowing object on the table is a shard of hazelwood carved with arcane sigils. This one-use item will bring one object to life when pressed against it as per the Animate Objects spell for 1 minute.

Treasure: Hazelwood Cypher.

Guest Rooms:

Each one of these side rooms is virtually identical, sporting a bed, table, and candle. They are nonetheless well-kept and ornate. Nothing is animated in these to offer a place to rest or hide for the party. The following treasure is spread among them, left on the tables.

Treasure: 500 cp, 900 sp, 2x Quartz (50 gp).

The Workshop:

Casting your light beyond the large metal doors reveals a large workshop; no doubt the heart of Coneth's lost enterprise. Tables hold the forgotten projects of the wizard, including swords, armors, books, and statues in all shapes and states. Glancing beyond, you see walls intricately carved with images of mages raising golems, bears, wolves, and scorpions from stone.

Three doors line the outside of the room, leading further to chambers unknown.

Before long you notice the blood stain trail leading to the remains of a man. On his chest you notice a glint of light buried among his robes. On a shelf placed on the southern wall, you see what looks to be a wand.

The corpse is that of Coneth. He succeeded in creating his wand but paid a terrible price. When it was created, the wand itself became animated. Realizing his mistake, Coneth tried to get to the door to anti-magic field. This prompted the wand to protect itself, slaying Coneth with its own set of animations.

On Coneth's neck is a key to an arcane lock. This lock opens the door to the bottom right of the Workshop. Inside that room is the emergency anti-magic field strong enough to shut down the whole ship. The players' goal should be to get the key, open the door, and turn it on. Once activated, the entire ship will be cloaked in an anti-magic field. Shutting down the animations for good as well as the ship's helm.

Upon approaching the wand, Coneth's body, or the anti-magic room, the wand will attempt self-preservation.

The wand on the shelf begins to glow and move. Along with it moves the façade of a giant scorpion carved into the wall. The beast, with glowing wand for a stinger, pulls itself from the

wall. Its stone chitin across six legs clinking as it steps off the table. Zap! A beam bursts from the tail, striking a pair of daggers that swirl off the table. Zap! Another beam strikes a blade that begins to rise. Zap! A beam fires into the corpse on the ground where it rises and whispers a warning: "Protect the Creator!"

Encounter: Wand Scorpion, Skeleton, 2x Flying Swords, and 2x Animated knives.

This fight has two outcomes: Either the players get the key from Coneth and activate the anti-magic field or they fight to the end of the encounter. All combatants will fight until the end. When the wand scorpion is bested, the wand can be taken.

This Wand of Animation is powerful enough to bring any one object to life as an action following the rules in the Animate Objects spell. However, any object animated by this wand will stop at nothing to reclaim and protect it. When the Wand Scorpion falls, treat the wand as an Animated Knife with the reanimate ability that leads the players on a chase until caught or neutralized with anti-magic. Players should find a sufficient way to restrain and blind the wand for transport off of the barge. Otherwise, it may very well try to wiggle free afterwards!

The room to the left of the Workshop is Coneth's Chambers while the room to the north is the Ship's Helm. Searching the tables, the players can find a vial of clear liquid with a toenail floating in it (Potion of Stone Giant Strength) by a large statue. Looking at the various supplies reveals raw leather and stone from Coneth's future projects.

Treasure: Potion of Stone Giant Strength, 1 ton of leather and 1 ton of stone (100gp ea.)

Anti-Magic Room:

An arcane lock holds the door to this room closed and can only be opened by the key on Coneth's corpse. In this room, an arcane device sits atop a podium while a lectern of papers is nearby. A DC 10 arcana check reveals this to be an anti-magic field generator for use in emergencies that covers the ship. A DC 15 (DC 20 if in combat) arcana check is necessary to follow the instructions and activate it. The anti-magic device is mounted to the pedestal which is bolted to the ship.

Coneth's Chambers:

This posh bedroom belonged to Coneth. Inside is lush furniture and fine decorations, including a pricey tapestry. Of note, there are piles of coins separated on the desk as is someone was in the process of counting them.

Treasure: 180 gp, and a large tapestry of Coneth's work (250 gp).

The Helm:

This small room contains the ship's spelljamming helm and a desk. The helm is at least a minor helm. A small chest behind the helm contains a golden necklace (Necklace of Adaptation) with a note that reads "This is for emergencies only! No more using it for space walks! -C" and a handful of gems.

Treasure: Necklace of Adaptation, 3x Bloodstones (50 gp), a Star Rose Quartz (50 gp) and a Pearl (100 gp).